



MEDIA RELEASE

Tucson Fire Department

Fire Chief Dan Newburn



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Human Services Alpha Truck Program

The Tucson Fire Department has partnered with many organizations across the county to better serve at-risk and vulnerable populations of the community who require social services to meet their daily living needs.

The Human Services Community includes the Pima County Public Health Nurses, AHCCCS/ALTCS, Veterans Administration, and CPSA (Regional Behavioral Health Authority). These organizations work together to complete social service referrals, in home patient evaluations, and case management for those who qualify for social services. This system is web-based ensuring communication between agencies regarding patient care.

The Human Services program began as the Tucson Fire Department Senior Assistance Program roughly five years ago. This program was developed to provide social service referral and assistance, to seniors who were repeatedly calling 9-1-1 for non-medical emergencies.

First responders were reporting seeing the same people, in many cases seniors, multiple times each shift for issues such as falls, inability to change oxygen, lack of mobility, etc. In most cases the patient was not injured, so they could not be transported to an area hospital. This caused some members of the Fire Department to search for a better way to serve these customers. Their efforts have been focused on providing a resolution to fire crews responding to non-emergent calls and getting assistance to citizens in crises, at the point of contact. Their determination and dedication has blossomed into a truly unique program that is changing the face of customer service as it relates to public safety.

The growing need has resulted in the formation of the "Alpha Truck Program." An Alpha Truck is a pickup truck; staffed by two firefighter/EMT's and their equipment. The Alpha Truck crew is responsible for evaluating the person in need and assisting them with solving their problems. This may require some basic education, or a slight change to the living environment. It may also require a social service referral, which can be made during the visit. In the past, the Tucson Fire Department would need to dispatch a Fire Engine, Ladder Truck, or Paramedic Unit to the scene of a non-emergent call. Through this simple innovative program the Department has found a way to better serve vulnerable populations, in a more efficient and cost effective manner.

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